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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

GENERAL BOOKS AND BOOKS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

The Passing of the Great Race: or the Racial Basis of European History. By MADISON GRANT. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1916. Pp. xxi, 245.)

IN the first third of this book (pt. I.) the author deals with the general problems of race, language, and nationality; in part II. he applies his conclusions to the study of European races. In this second portion of the treatise there are chapters on the prehistoric peoples of Europe, followed by more detailed studies of the distribution and characteristics of the three existing racial types—the Mediterranean, the Alpine, and the “Nordic” or Teutonic. Somewhat more than half of part II. is devoted to discussion of the Nordic race—its origins, its distribution in Europe and beyond, its relation to “Aryan” languages and civilizations, and its outlook for the future.

The book contains much solid scientific and historical truth set forth with dignity and clearness, although often with a lack of coherence. It affords evidence of minute and careful study, even though the author never cites his authority for particular statements and supplies but a limited bibliography in the appendix. His endeavor to interpret history “in terms of race” is a legitimate and alluring enterprise, even if he goes rather far in claiming originality for the idea.

But *The Passing of the Great Race* is not so much an objective scientific treatise as a carefully reasoned argument in support of preconceived convictions. With Houston Stewart Chamberlain and the German school of historians in general, Mr. Grant believes that the Nordic race is the great achieving race of history and that the hope of the future lies in the conservation of the Nordic populations of the world. He is disturbed by the evidences that this “great race” is “passing”, and is yielding the leadership to the “inferior” peoples of Alpine or Mediterranean stock. His book is an attempt to provide a prophylactic against the danger which thus threatens the security of mankind.

Mr. Grant argues that race has far greater weight in determining historical progress than has environment; that race characters are permanent and immutable; and that the intermixture of races always results in the predominance of the “lower” type. All of these premises may have good standing in anthropological science; but no one of them is so dogmatically certain as Mr. Grant seems to hold. He maintains that, while the Nordic peoples have accomplished most for civilized progress in the past, they are now losing their leadership in the world.

The great wars of modern times, from the Thirty Years' War to the present European struggle, have been peculiarly destructive of the Nordic leaders and rulers. Even more have they suffered from intermarriage with the "lower" types of the white man, their Alpine and Mediterranean neighbors in Europe, and from their attempts to settle in the hotter zones of the earth for which they are unfitted.

The remedy for these conditions is clear to Mr. Grant, and he would apply it with the unflinching severity of a wise physician. Society should give power to its real leaders and abandon the futile illusions of democracy; it should restrain the intermarriage of "higher" and "lower" races; it should turn a deaf ear to the apostles of social uplift, letting the incompetent races sink to their natural level. "We Americans must realize that the altruistic ideals which have controlled our social development during the past century, and the maudlin sentimentalism that has made America 'an asylum for the oppressed', are sweeping the nation toward a racial abyss" (p. 228).

The argument of the book must stand for what it is worth. To the present reviewer it is unconvincing, partly because it rests on debatable assumptions, partly because the method of the argument seems itself unsound. The author ranges far and wide to demonstrate that nearly all the progressive peoples of Europe have belonged to the fair-haired, blue-eyed, long-headed Nordic race. But his determinations often rest on the most questionable evidence. Thus the Trojan War was a conflict between the Nordic Achaeans and the Mediterranean Trojans; but the leaders on both sides were Nordics (p. 144). The patricians of early Rome were Nordics, the plebeians were Mediterraneans (pp. 139-140, 192); consequently the South Italians of to-day are descendants of the slaves of primitive Rome (p. 65). Aristotle was a Mediterranean (p. 197). Christ was apparently a Nordic (pp. 197, 199). Primitive Christianity was the religion of slaves, while Stoicism was the religion of Nordics (p. 193). "The chief men of the Cinque Cento were of Nordic, largely Gothic and Lombard, blood, a fact easily recognized by a close inspection of busts or portraits in north Italy. Dante, Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci were all of Nordic type" (p. 191). The book abounds in affirmations of this sort without the evidence to sustain them. One does not need to deny a certain pre-eminence to the Nordic race in order to feel that Mr. Grant has vastly overstated the case. The author rightly rejects the principle of determining race affinities on the basis of language. But it seems evident that in some instances he depends more on linguistic than on anthropological data for his theory of the expansion of the Nordics. Wherever "Aryan" language is found he predicates a Nordic invasion with the consequent establishment of Nordic, or Aryan, speech.

Mr. Grant's book can hardly be regarded as an important contribution to historical science. Its dogmatic assurance and its partizanship impair its value to learning. Its main thesis is not established, and, in the

present state of scholarship, is not capable of establishment. For guidance in matters relating to European race problems American students of history will continue to depend, as they have done for nearly twenty years, on Ripley's solid and discriminating *Races of Europe*.

A. B. S.

BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty. By HAROLD J. LASKI, of the Department of History in Harvard University. (New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. 1917. Pp. x, 297.)

THIS is the initial volume, it appears, in a series of historical studies which are intended to form the avenue of approach to an ultimate consideration of the nature of sovereignty. It is an example of painstaking and rather brilliant historical writing, and may justly be classed, both as regards the subject-matter with which it deals and its scholarly method of treatment, with the studies of Mr. J. N. Figgis, and particularly his *From Gerson to Grotius* and his *Churches in the Modern State*.

What may be regarded as the backbone of the study consists of five chapters dealing with the political theory of the disruption of the established Church of Scotland, of the Oxford Movement, of the Catholic Revival, and of the political theories of de Maistre and Bismarck, so far as they relate to the nature of sovereignty. In addition, there is an introductory chapter on "the sovereignty of the State" and two brief papers entitled "notes" on "sovereignty and federalism" and "sovereignty and centralization" printed as appendixes to the main part of the book.

The chapter on the disruption is mainly a critical analysis of the contention of the Free Church of Scotland that the sovereignty of the state does not properly extend to the right of control over matters purely ecclesiastical. Specifically, the Free Church party denied the supremacy of Parliament in respect to the affairs of the Church of Scotland except in so far as they involved purely civil matters; in short, the church was a *societas perfecta* within its own sphere and, no act of Parliament interfering with its organization, creed, or discipline was binding without its consent. Similarly, the political theory of the Oxford Movement represented a protest against the claim of Parliament to control the Church in its purely ecclesiastical affairs. Both movements were therefore essentially anti-Erastian and against the idea of an "all-absorptive state". The political theory of the Catholic revival which ended in the passage of the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 was likewise a protest against the doctrine subsequently elaborated by Gladstone in his *Vatican Decrees* that since the papacy asserted a claim